

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-5, 9 and 14 are pending in this application, with Claim 1 being the only independent claim. Claim 1 has been amended herein. Claims 6, 7 and 10-13 have been cancelled without prejudice. Support for the amendments to Claim 1 may be found in the specification. Applicant submits that no new matter has been added.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication that Claims 5 and 7 recite allowable subject matter. By this amendment, Claim 1 has been amended to recite the features of Claim 7.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 9-12 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,203,899 (Hirose et al.) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,502,935 (Barcock et al.). This rejection is respectfully traversed. Nevertheless, without conceding the propriety of the rejection, and solely to advance prosecution, Applicant has amended independent Claim 1 to recite the features of Claim 7. Applicant submits that in view of the amendments, the rejection has been rendered moot. Accordingly, Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103 rejection.

Applicant submits that the present invention is patentably defined by independent Claim 1. Dependent Claims 3-5, 9 and 14 are also allowable, in their own right, for defining features of the present invention in addition to those recited in independent Claim 1. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is requested.

Applicant respectfully requests that this Amendment After Final be entered. This Amendment was not presented earlier as it was earnestly believed that the claims on file would be found allowable. Given the Examiner's familiarity with the application, Applicant believes that a full understanding and consideration of this Amendment would not require undue time or effort by the Examiner. Moreover, Applicant submits that this Amendment places the application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, entry of this Amendment is believed to be appropriate and such entry is respectfully requested.

Applicant submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal rejection set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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